

Employee Creativity and Survival of Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State

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Abstract – This study empirically examined the relationship between employee creativity and survival of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, rivers state. Survey research method was adopted with the use of structured questionnaire to collect data on the dimensions of employee creativity (idea generation, problem sensitivity and brain storming) and the measures of corporate survival (adaptability, competitiveness and brainstorming). 300 employees were chosen as the sample size with the aid of Judgmental sampling techniques from the population of 1,800 employees of manufacturing firms operating in Port Harcourt, rivers state. The collected data from the distributed and retrieved questionnaire were analyzed through the use of mean; t-statistic (tables, pie charts, and standard deviation) and Pearson Moment correlation was used to test the stated hypotheses with the aid of statistical package for social sciences. The findings showed that there is a positive, very strong and significant relationship between idea generation, problem sensitivity and brainstorming and corporate survival (adaptability, competitiveness and keystone vulnerability) of employees in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It also provides empirical evidence of the existence of weak, strong and moderate relationship between idea generation, problem sensitivity and brainstorming in Port Harcourt, Rivers State specifically. However, the study inference that for any manufacturing firm that wants to grow and yield productivity, there should be immediate recognition of employees that are creative, to achieve this, managers should make it as a routine to work as team, brainstorm and be creative as air is to the living.

Keywords: Creativity, Employee, Survival, Adaptation

INTRODUCTION

Firms continually work to improve employee creativity and decrease turnover. Leadership and incentives often play a vital role in developing the creativity in employee. Meanwhile, employee creativity and incentives also play a role in discussions regarding survival of corporate firms. Gross (1968) has said that organizations that doesn't have survival as a primary goal or objective should have a rethink. This is elaborative enough that the means of survival is paramount to firms, because without survival there won't be progression.

Creativity has been defined in a multitude of ways in various studies. Creativity “refers to original and novel work, emphasizing the generation of new and original ideas” (Madjar 2011, 731).these creative ideas must be turned to action: implementation is required.

Furthermore, research has shown the positive influence of leaders in the workplace, with specific regard to creativity (Unsworth 2001). The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between employee creativity and adaptability in manufacturing firms. This relationship is critical to understanding the role that creativity play in the workplace.

Statement of Research Problem

Today, manufacturing firms often faced with fierce and intense competition due to the activities of rivals, their substitute service offerings and some government policies. As a result of these pressures, increased productivity, profitability, improved quality of service etc. are seemingly difficult to attain by some of these organizations without having good workforce with innovative and creative thinking, the survival of the organization becomes a major problem. The irresponsiveness to the developing trend of training employees and developing the human

resource asset of the organization has created a big challenge to both the productivity of the employees and the survival of the organization. Hence, the need to critically examine the impact of employee creativity on organizational survival.

Hypothesis of the study

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between employees creativity and corporate survival.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between employees creativity and adaptability.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

More than just a buzz word, creativity is becoming acknowledged as a critical factor in organizational success. Creativity in organizations is seen as the process by which new ideas that make innovation possible are developed. Talk to any manager and sooner or later the word “creativity” will come up this is because creativity is the major key that will yield to a satisfactory output.

Employees are never neglected in any firm, they are as important and indispensable as sand is to a building, without them nothing can be done, they contribute immensely to the success of an organization; hence their skill, abilities, aspirations, knowledge gained, experience and motivation are of great importance to any firm. Zhou (2003) found that when creative co-workers were present, the less number of supervisors engaged in close monitoring, the greater the creativity exhibited by the employees.

CORPORATE SURVIVAL

Corporate survival is very crucial at this period of turbulence; employees are part of the organizations resources which has been found to appreciate with time by knowledge gained, skills, abilities and experience. Even living things see survival as part of growth in a child, and also that if a child does not survive; it is liken to say that the child is dead and cannot do anything beneficial anymore.

Survival of an organization is described as the operation of business organization on going concern sometimes refers to as manage to stay in business.(Akindele *et al*, 2012). In an attempt to respond to the activities that will enable organization to operate on going-concern, organizations are constantly in the process of structuring and restructuring to keep abreast with these activities which do come in form of complexity to include technology, structure, competitive advantage, number of employees, physical expansions, success of a product line (Lipton, 2003)

Oluremi & Gbenga (2011) asserted that business organization that wants to succeed must develop a clear understanding of the trends of business environment and forces that shape competition organizational survival and growth are implicit organizational goals requiring the investment of energy and resources(Jones& Bartlet,2008).

Just as all living things yearns for survival, so organization does, without survival, there won't be growth nor productivity, that is why Gross(1968) says every organization should see survival as an absolute prerequisite for its serving any interest whatsoever

ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability is has the prefix ‘adapt’ and suffix ‘ability’ which is the strength to shift or adjust to new conditions. As Human being, we adjust in several stages from childhood to adulthood, likewise organization. Whether comfortable or not it is ideal for firms to adapt to aid survival and productivity. The problems of balancing and costs of adaptability is fundamental to business strategy. Miles *et al*. (1984)

Miles (1984) also stated in his analysis of cigarette industry's adaptation to changing market conditions, demonstrated that cultivating the loyalty of consumers and other constituencies and developing managerial skills that fit ‘strategic alternatives for organization coping’ are forms of slack or adaptive capability that can be strategically valuable to the organization.

Adaptive capability in contrast, has been associated with the “wandering organization” (Zammuto, 1982) using voluntary elaboration process(Weick 1977) and involvement of the right individual to arrive at variations of standard practice. This is to say that creative individuals are the right employees despite the changes that occur at any given time, because the outcome is worthwhile.

To survive and make profits, organizations need to adapt continuously to the different levels of environmental uncertainty. Amah and Baridan, (2012)

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design will be used in this research work. This is because the aim of this research is to generate data among employee in registered manufacturing firms in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, as a means to understanding the relationship between employee creativity and corporate survival.

The Population for this study is 1,800 which constitute all registered manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State. A judgmental sampling technique was used to select 300 firms out of the total population of the study. Also, out of the 300 survey questionnaire administered, 248 which was properly filled, returned and has a useful response which served as a basis for data analysis, the data was analyzed via the use of frequency distribution, mean scores. Correlation coefficient was to ascertain the level of relationship between the study variables and it was done with the aid of statistical package for social science at 0.05 level of confidence.

The reliability of the instrument was done through Cronbach's alpha. Table below indicates that all dimensions of the dependent and independent variables had Cronbach’s alpha value that are greater than zero point seven (0.7) which is generally approved as, we therefore conclude that the research instrument is reliable.

Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha
Idea Generation	.967
Problem Sensitivity	.998
Brainstorming	.948
Adaptability	.972
Competitiveness	.993
Keystone vulnerability	.987

Source: SPSS (Version 22) Output based on 2018 field survey data.

It is expected that in the same background, the same outcome would be attained if the research instrument is re-administered, indicating reliability of the research instrument. The data generated from the questionnaire is thus used in the analysis of the research questions and the research hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The results of the analyses of the data obtained from the questionnaires administered. These results were obtained, using the statistical methods explained in the research methodology. The presentation of data was based on the research questions and hypotheses of this study in deriving resultant answers to the research questions so that conclusions could be made in terms of the hypotheses formulated.

Response Rate

From the sample size of 303 employees in registered manufacturing firms in Rivers State, the distributed and retrieved questionnaire is shown below.

Table 1. Distributed and Retrieved Questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent %
Distributed	303	100
Not retrieved	44	14.5
Retrieved	259	85.5
Discarded Response	11	4.2 of the retrieved questionnaire
Useful Response	248	95.8 of the retrieved questionnaire

Source: Field Survey Data, 2018.

The above Table 1 shows that 303 questionnaires were distributed and 259 representing 85.5% were retrieved while the other 44 (14.5%) were not retrieved. 11 of the retrieved questionnaire representing 4.2% were discarded because they were not filled properly. Hence, 248 (95.8%) of the questionnaire retrieved were useful, it therefore served as the basis for analysis in this study.

Length of Service of Respondent

Table 2 Length of Service of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 to 5 Years	66	26.6	26.6	26.6
6 to 10 Years	102	41.1	41.1	67.7
11 to 15 Years	49	19.8	19.8	87.5
16 to 20 Years	31	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	248	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey Data, 2018.

Table 2 above shows that 66 (26.6%) have worked between 1 to 5 years, 102 (41.1%) have worked between 6 to 10 years, 49(19.8%) have worked between 11 to 15 years while, 31 representing 12.5% of the total respondents have worked between 16 to 20 years in their respective firms. More than half of the respondents show an above average work experience, hence the employees have capacity to respond to the questionnaire. The complementary pie chart is shown below in Figure 1.

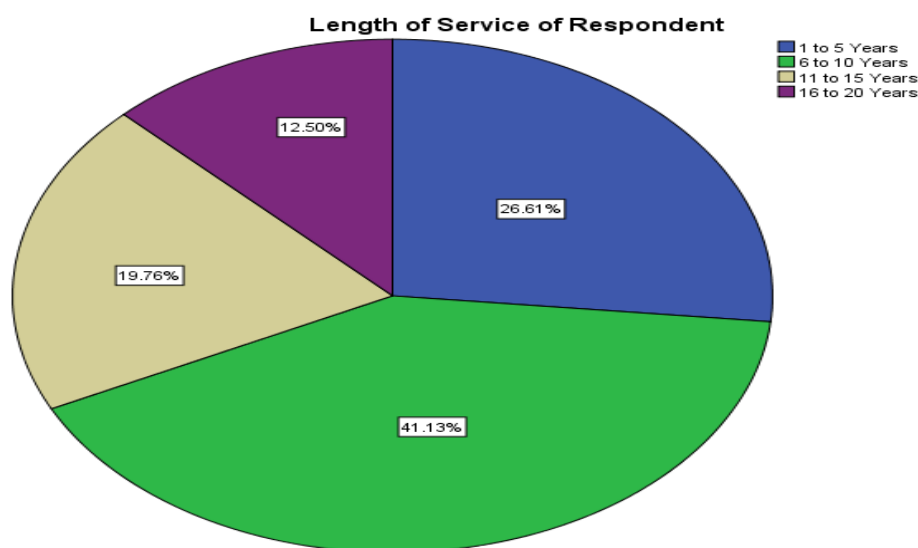


Figure 1 Pie chart showing length of service of respondent

Bivariate Analyses

Table 3; below shows the description of range of correlation (r) values, as well as the correlative level of association

Range of r (+ and – sign value)	Association strength
± 0.80 – 0.99	Very strong
± 0.60 – 0.79	Strong
± 0.40 – 0.59	Moderate
± 0.20 – 0.39	Weak
± 0.00 – 0.19	Very weak

Source: Researcher’s Desk 2018

The above shows that the ‘+’ sign of r points a direct and positive relationship, while ‘-’ of r shows an indirect or inverse relationship. Thus, the r sign indicates the direction of relationship between the predictor and criterion variables.

Table 4 Summary of Bivariate Analysis

<i>S</i>	<i>Statement of Relationship</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Magnitude</i>	<i>Direction</i>
1	<i>Relationship between employee creativity and corporate survival</i>	0.988	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
2	<i>Relationship between idea generation and adaptability</i>	0.983	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
3	<i>Relationship between idea generation and competitiveness</i>	0.989	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
4	<i>Relationship between idea generation and key stakeholder vulnerability</i>	0.993	<i>Very strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
5	<i>Relationship between problem sensitivity and adaptability</i>	0.988	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
6	<i>Relationship between problem sensitivity and competitiveness</i>	0.962	<i>Very strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
7	<i>Relationship between problem sensitivity and key stakeholder vulnerability</i>	0.971	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
8	<i>Relationship between brainstorming and adaptability</i>	0.954	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
9	<i>Relationship between brainstorming and competitiveness</i>	0.948	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>
10	<i>Relationship between brainstorming and key stakeholder vulnerability</i>	0.955	<i>Very Strong</i>	<i>+ve</i>

Source: Field Survey Data, 2018.

Table 5 Correlations analysis showing the relationship between employee creativity and corporate survival

Correlations

	Employee Creativity	Corporate Survival
Employee Creativity		
Pearson Correlation	1	.988**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	248	248
Corporate Survival		
Pearson Correlation	.988**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	248	248

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2018

Table 6, shows that the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.988. This implies that a very strong positive relationship exists between employee creativity and corporate survival. This means that direct relationship exist between the variables and further improvement in employee creativity will result in better corporate survival of the firms studied.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 1.2 shows that the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.988. With PV of 0.000 which is less than 0.01. The ‘r’ value is closer to (1), which implies that a very strong positive relationship exists between employee creativity and corporate survival. This means that direct relationship exist between the variables and further improvement in employee creativity will result in better corporate survival of the firms studied. Also, Table 4.24 reveals $F\text{-Cal} = 9998.271 > F\text{-tab} (0.05, 1, 247) = 3.92$ hence the decision of a useful model is upheld. This shows that significant and very strong relationship exists between employee creativity and corporate survival.

In the same vein, (Kampylis and Beria2014) said creative thinking is the thinking that enables students to apply their imagination to generating ideas ,questions and hypotheses, experimenting with alternatives and evaluating their own and their peers ideas and final product and process.

It is necessary to do the following always;

remember→ understand→ apply→ analyse→ evaluate→ create

Being creative as employees requires reflection, encourages engagement and develops confidence and responsibility in other to adjust effectively. The ability and the inclination to be creative are essential to living a fulfilled and successful life and it is valued at workplace.

In the course of this study, it was so obvious to know that the issues that will make Manufacturers Association of Nigeria firms to yield to productivity is for the employees employed to be creative. In the absence of creativity, there will be employees going on leave frequently, rapid rate of absenteeism, firms at the verge of folding, employees having no desire and or passion to work, among many others.

Furthermore, we should take cognizance that manufacturing firms has several departments and sections, the work that is being done in stages and time frame is being articulated to it. Imagine an uncreative employee cannot fit in to do this kind of work because there is need for extreme creativity, while the employee are in their respective places of work, they should brainstorm and be creative always, Thinking of a better and easy way of achieving a result that will move the firm forward.

Hence, from the above statements, it is being concluded that for any manufacturing firm to grow and yield productivity, there should be immediate recognition of employees that are creative, it should be stated out clearly in the mission and vision of the firm so that the employees will be guided and work with that on daily basis. Also, concern for employees should not be neglected when an appreciative idea is being brought forth.

Stated below are the recommendations;

- i. Human resource manager should not just employ an employee based on certificates the person has, but there should be a practical interview by so doing the person that is creative will be known and employed to fit in appropriately for the right job.
- ii. Managers in manufacturing firms should make it a routine for employees to work as a team, and brainstorm; they should see creativity as air is to the living which will yield to rapid productivity.
- iii. Finally creativity supplies continuous satisfaction and decreases boredom. CEOs and Managers should see creativity as an essential mechanism especially in Manufacturing Firms.

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